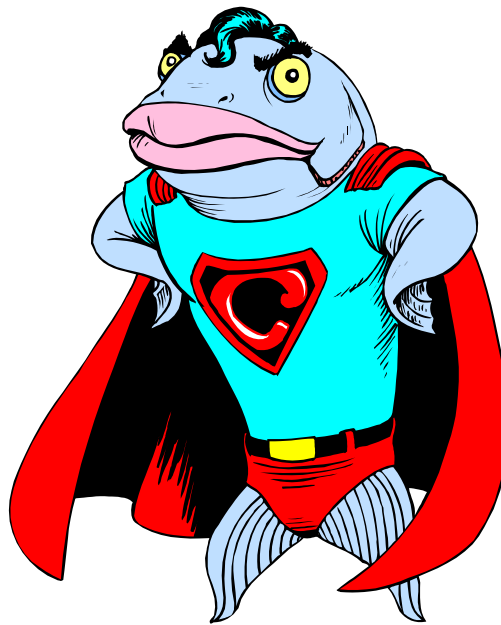


# FISH! STICKS®:

## How Do You Get FISH! to Stick?



*with*  
Stephen C. Lundin  
Big Tuna Ph.D.

May 15, 1–3 p.m. ET

***The Leader in You***

Sponsored by the NRCS Social Sciences Institute and the National Employee Development Center, in cooperation with the National Association of Conservation Districts, National Conservation District Employees Association, National Association of State Conservation Agencies, and the Federal Training Network.

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## Welcome!

In March of 2000 the book *FISH!* was released. At first it could only be found in the food section of book stores, but then slowly it started swimming into the world of work. Now more than two million copies have found their way into reader's hands all over the world, and the message that work can be fun, and that an improved quality of work life is only a few choices away, has inspired tens of thousands to give the FISH! Philosophy a try.

However, those who start a FISH! revolution in their workplace quickly find themselves facing a different test. Effecting change in an organization is a piece of cake, or perhaps cheese, compared with the challenge of getting change to stick. After the training sessions, the motivational talks, the special events, the posters, the newsletter articles, and the contests that often accompany a large-scale change, there is a need to shift from externally generated energy to natural energy. That is where a book released in January of 2003 comes to the rescue. Called *FISH! Sticks*, it introduces the three commitments necessary to get FISH! or anything worthwhile that requires commitment, to stick.

In this program, the author of *FISH!*, *FISH! Tales*, and *FISH! Sticks*, Stephen Lundin, will discuss the three commitments and how to put them into practice to maintain and renew that which we work so hard to create.

## Program Outline

Welcome by our moderator, Tracey Matisak

### *Presentation*

- Introduction
- Part One
  - ❑ The Beginnings of FISH!
  - ❑ The FISH! Philosophy
  - ❑ FISH! Story Update
  - ❑ FISH! Sticks Overview

Intermission (10 minutes)

### *Presentation*

- Part Two
  - ❑ FISH! Sticks Video Clip
  - ❑ Fierce Conversations
  - ❑ Find IT
  - ❑ Live IT
  - ❑ Confirm IT
  - ❑ Summary

Question and answer session

Wrap-up

## How to Get the Most from the Seminar

### *During the seminar...*

- Participate! Contribute to the discussion. If you are participating in the live presentation of this program, call in, fax, or e-mail questions and stories about how the FISH! Philosophy works in your company.
- Take notes. Jot down ideas on how you can apply information from this presentation to your own workplace.

### *After the seminar...*

- Take what you've learned back to your organization.
- Discuss with your colleagues how the different points apply to your organization.
- Find out more about the FISH! Philosophy by reading *FISH!*, *FISH! Tales*, and *FISH! Sticks*, which are available at most bookstores.
- E-mail Dr. Lundin with your questions at [SLRunner@aol.com](mailto:SLRunner@aol.com).

## Presentation

### **The FISH! Philosophy®**

The way of life we have called the FISH! Philosophy is on the surface in a fish market in Seattle, but the Fish mongers who work there did not *create* the FISH! Philosophy. They *discovered* it and put it into practice in their work. And what they have done is so impressive that workers in office buildings come down to the market at lunch time just to get pumped up to go back to work.

In fact the FISH! Philosophy can be found in healthy and productive workplaces, homes, and relationships all over the world. For example, the FISH! Philosophy has thrived at Southwest Airlines for more than twenty-five highly successful years. If you seek verification of the existence of the FISH! Philosophy, just pause for a moment and look deeply in your own heart. You find it there.

The terms from the book *FISH!*—"play," "make their day," "be there," and "choose your attitude"—were first coined by documentary filmmakers from Charthouse Learning, as we edited footage from the Seattle fish market. These four ingredients have become the standard by which we gauge the livability of any workplace: a school, a phone center, a hospital, a bank, a plant, or an insurance company. If you don't have lightheartedness, service to others, present-moment listening, and an exercise of the power to choose your attitude—all in the right proportions—you also don't have a great place to work.

Now lets take a quick look at each of the individual ingredients.

## FISH! Ingredients

Play—Carry a light heart wherever you go.



How might I be an instrument of lightheartedness?



Is there a smile in my voice and on my face?

Make Their Day—A great gift is the gift of positive engagement.



Whose day will I make today?



How might the way I live my life be a source of inspiration for others?

Be There—Amazing things can happen when you learn to be where you are.



Where am I?



Where do I need to be?



What is the impact of my "be there" decision?

Choose Your Attitude—The attitude you have right now is the one you are choosing. Choose wisely; your life depends on it.



What attitude am I exhibiting?



Should I stay with this attitude or choose another?



## **FISH! Sticks**

A year into our FISH! journey we had a blinding glimpse of the obvious. Building a FISH! culture can be difficult and exacting, requiring courage at times. That is certainly true. But keeping the energy of FISH! alive and vital over the long haul is an even bigger challenge. We called the solution to this problem of keeping FISH! alive "FISH! Sticks®." How do you get FISH! to stick once you have it going?

In fact, the biggest challenges we face in life are similar. Challenges such as maintaining a healthy family life, sustaining a vision, growing a marriage, sticking to a diet, building strong relationships—all of these must weather the ups and downs, the grief and joy, of life. And when we survive these challenges and come out the other side intact, we realize that these are the things that make life worth living. And whether the goal is a fun and productive workplace, keeping a vision alive, making a change stick, or losing some weight and keeping it off, we have found three commitments that must be made in order to be successful. We call this the FISH! Sticks portion of the FISH! Philosophy.

**Find IT:** We spend much of our life in one community or another. The communities of work and home are the places where we live our lives. In all of our communities we must decide who we are being while we do the work we are doing. And in each we need to find our place within the overall vision. That place can have greatness or it can be routine. Whether we shoot for the high road or are happy with a middle road well traveled, our first commitment is to find our path and our place on it.

What if we were to take our job as a starting place and begin having conversations about what is possible? As we search for the possible, we move from a fixation on our role to a consideration of our possibilities within the community goal. We might call the community goal a vision, mission, purpose, or strategy. It really doesn't matter. It is bigger than one person and requires a new kind of thinking—the kind we do with our voice.

So we began a search and our only tool is conversation. The conversation itself is the first important commitment of FISH! Sticks as we seek to Find IT, to find our place based on potential and possibility. This conversation continues as long as we are committed. The Find IT conversation is the first commitment.

Men and women in thriving organizations discuss their commitment to each other and to the vision of the organization with great regularity. And in that dialogue, commitment gains strength and clarity. The authentic conversations create energy and a failure to have the conversations consumes energy.

*If the feeling of love comes from the act of loving and the feeling of friendship comes from being a friend, the positive energy of participating in something larger than one's self comes from the scary but rewarding act of being committed to something larger than self.*

*As each of us searches for our IT inside the vision, we create the energy that sustains both our IT and the vision. But the conversations must be real and fierce.\**

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\*I first heard the words "fierce" and "conversation" used together by the poet David Whyte.

**Live It (Vision Moments):** A second form of commitment is the choice to live the vision moments you discover during your ongoing search for IT. All who work at the fish market accept responsibility for recreating and renewing the market and its vision by the way they are "being" at the market while they are doing whatever they are doing. They watch for opportunities to be the vision and take advantage of the vision moments.

Jan Carlson of Scandinavian Airlines implored his workforce to "live it" when he promoted the idea that every interaction with a customer is a "moment of truth" and the way these moments are managed determines the future of the airline.

The FISH! Sticks portion of the FISH! Philosophy takes this idea one step further. Every moment you are awake is full of opportunities to bring the vision alive by "living it." And it is not just the work you do, but who you are being while you do the work you do.

We must find our "it" inside the vision and live "it." The vision on the wall is often a group vision written for a variety of constituencies and it will not tell any given person how to be. We are responsible for finding our "it" inside the vision. Then it is up to us to live "it" and in so doing we recreate our organization in exciting ways every day.

*When we act on the realization that we recreate our organization every day by the way we live there, we release the energy contained in the second commitment. All we have to do is live it.*

**Confirm IT:** The third commitment is perhaps the most critical, for if it is not a part of the mix, we are eventually kidnapped by the gravity pull of old habits and old ways of being. We need to talk with each other about our effectiveness in real time and these conversations must also be authentic and fierce.

At the fish market we studied, they used the word "coaching." Coaching was their way of building this commitment into their life by making it an expectation that, if you see something out of alignment with the vision, you will speak up.



When you coach, you are confirming the course of your journey in life, moment to moment. Examples of inconsistent behavior that might lead to coaching at the market would include being grouchy, leaving a knife on the counter, becoming distracted, or throwing a fish improperly. The bottom line of coaching is that it is always done in the spirit of becoming a better team by helping one another grow as team members.

In other cultures, such as Southwest Airlines, there is a regular dialogue that serves to confirm the direction of the organization and each person's alignment with that direction. This can come in the form of coaching or in the form of affirmation. It can also come from symbols and stories. All serve to confirm direction through conversation and, in so doing, release the energy of renewal.

*The third commitment, Confirm IT, ensures the flow of information necessary for renewal by making it everyone's responsibility. Eventually these conversations become as normal as breathing.*

## FISH! Sticks Orientation Questions:

### *Find IT*



What relationship am I committed to co-creating with my significant other?



Do I have the clarity and intention necessary to recognize vision moments at work?



Does what I am creating with my life justify the life energy it consumes?

### *Live IT*



Am I living the vision moments available to me at work?



At home?



In the community?

*Confirm IT*

Am I ready to step into the difficult and fierce conversations necessary to regenerate and renew the vision?



With whom will I converse?



Is there an issue in my personal or business life that I am avoiding? Is it time for a fierce and authentic confirmation?

## The Two Growing Edges of the FISH! Philosophy

There are two places where growth occurs and takes FISH! and FISH! Sticks deeper. The first is the edge of Innovation and the second the edge of Inspiration. Both supply the energy of recreation.

### Innovation



Have I engaged the creative process on my journey?



Does the FISH! have an opportunity to get out of the tank?

### Inspiration



Am I a source of inspiration?



Do I have a source of inspiration?

## The One Secret

We have considered the four ingredients of FISH!, the three commitments of FISH! Sticks, the two growing edges, and now for the one secret. Here it is! Da da! If you want to quickly get to a FISH!y frame of mind, there is a door you can open; and if you enter and embrace all you find there, you will "be" the FISH! Philosophy. You will be there. The door is called:

## Gratitude



Who are my mentors?



For what am I grateful?



What had to happen for me to get to this place?

## Final Thoughts and a Warning

A major transportation company developed a detailed plan for implementing the FISH! Philosophy, but had to put off implementation for a quarter. During the delay, one of the team leaders re-read the book *FISH!* and became aware that the company's plan had taken on the complexity one typically finds in a large-scale corporate change program. The simplicity that had attracted the company to the FISH! Philosophy in the first place was missing. The team leader remembered something he already knew and went back to the drawing board.

*Anything that requires individual commitment to thrive can only be fueled by natural energy.*

So instead of a beginning with a strategic plan, perhaps you might begin with a conversation about life at work. See if you can't find some natural energy on the team. Look for those interested in improving the quality of their work life. If all else fails, begin in the way of great change agents throughout history: Model the way until someone shows an interest, and let it begin there. Now fan the flames!

**GO FISH!**





## About Your Presenter

Stephen C. Lundin, Big Tuna Ph.D., is a writer and filmmaker who lives in Maplewood, Minnesota, and works at ChartHouse International Learning Corporation. He is author of the best-selling books *FISH!*, *FISH Tales*, and *FISH! Sticks*, with more than three million copies in print worldwide. He is currently working on *FISH! for Life*, which will be released in early 2004. He was also a part of the team that created the best-selling and award-winning film, *FISH!* and the Firestarter Series by David Whyte. You can reach him at 1-800-328-3789 or [slrunner@aol.com](mailto:slrunner@aol.com).

## Question Sheet

Use this form to write your question or for discussion among your colleagues. Please write clearly.

Your name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Your organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Your location (city, state, country):  
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Your question (25 words or less):  
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